

## CONDOLENCES TO ...

The family and friends of Montana artist and Governor's Arts Award honoree **Jim Poor**. He died Feb. 2. "He was so well loved and will be missed so much by all whose lives he touched," said Arni Fishbaugh, executive director of the Montana Arts Council. In an introduction to a 2009 survey of his work at Paris Gibson Square Museum of Art in Great Falls, "Jim Poor: Confluences," Bob Durden describes his career and legacy:



"The Folly of Two" by Jim Poor

"Leaving behind his early studies in pharmacology, Jim Poor's career has spanned many courses of art theory, practice, experimentation and experience over the past five decades. During his days at Eastern Montana College, he studied under the direction of Isabelle Johnson – a first-generation Montana modernist painter whom Jim credits with 'opening his eyes to modernism and bringing it all together.' He completed graduate studies at Stanford, where the exposure to Richard Diebenkorn and other Bay Area artists profoundly influenced him. Upon his return to Montana and working as an art educator/administrator, he mentored innumerable students and peers, helped establish two art museums, and initiated an artist-in-residence program. Throughout his career, Jim has generously sought out and shared a diverse knowledge with anyone willing to expand their experience." Born in Livingston, Poor earned a bachelor's degree from Eastern Montana College (now MSU Billings) and a master's degree in painting and art history at Stanford, along with studies at Montana State University, the University of Oregon and the California College of Arts and Crafts. He was the supervisor of art education for the Great Falls Public Schools and a founding force for the creation of the Paris Gibson Square Museum of Art. He also served as director of the Holter Museum of Art in Helena and acting director for the School of Art, Montana State University in Bozeman. He received a Governor's Arts Award in 1985 and served on behalf of the Montana Arts Council as a representative on the Capitol Complex Advisory Committee, as well as a panelist for many of the arts council's grant programs. Poor was also chairman of Montana Cultural Advocacy, president of the Montana Institute of the Arts Foundation, and member of the Alliance for Arts Education, the Montana Institute of the Arts, and Montana Art Education Association. He was elected president by the 12-state Pacific Region of the National Art Education Association. He exhibited widely in California, Montana, Oregon and Washington, and has work in collections throughout the region. In addition to living in Great Falls for many years, he also called Helena and Kalispell his home.

The family and friends of Billings actor **Rollie Bach**. He died Jan. 30 at age 83. Bach was born on a homestead in Ellsworth, WI, on April 16, 1930, and grew up in Red Wing, MN. He joined the Minnesota National Guard and taught bayonet use and map reading until his discharge in September 1952. A 50-year career in retail took Bach and his family from Minnesota to Nebraska to South Dakota to F.A. Buttrey stores in Anaconda and finally Billings. He was well suited to this profession – detailed-oriented, and a kind, inspiring boss with an artist's eye for display. He loved theater – going to theater, talking about theater, working on sets, designing sets, and being in productions. His association with Billings Studio Theatre (BST), where he was a steadfast volunteer, board member, actor, designer, mentor and friend, was a commitment that brought him great pleasure and satisfaction. His final performance last spring, at age 83, was his 45th play at BST. He was also known for his Christmas decorations – festooning the Bach home with award-winning outdoor decorations, an elaborately decorated tree in almost every room, and a Dickens village that was featured in two articles in the *Billings Gazette*, as well as decorating award-winning trees at the Moss Mansion for Billings Studio Theatre. He traveled extensively, and sang in the St. Pius choir.



Rollie Bach

The friends and family of country doctor and singer-songwriter **Ben Bullington**. He died Nov. 18 from pancreatic cancer in Livingston; he was 58. His work drew a passionate following from the small towns of Montana to the music halls of Nashville. He spent his last days in a room awash in items that reflected a keen and complex mind. Among them: his beloved 1929 Martin guitar, a blizzard of to-do lists ("lift-tickets for the boys"), concert posters, atlases, works by Robert Frost and the Sufi poet, Hafiz, and *The Complete Calvin and Hobbes*. After being diagnosed with terminal cancer a year earlier, Dr. Bullington retired from his job at the 25-bed hospital in Big Timber, to spend as much time as possible with his family, and to make as much music as he could for as long as he could. During that year he kept up a solid schedule of touring between chemo treatments, playing music festivals from Florida to Texas to Tennessee, topping it off with his third appearance at Red Ants Pants, Montana's answer to Woodstock. He also collaborated with some of America's greatest recording artists, such as Rodney Crowell, Bill Payne, Mary



Ben Bullington

Chapin Carpenter, Tracy Nelson and Will Kimbrough, to create his fifth CD, *Ben Bullington*. It flows like a musical memoir, filled with lyrical, exquisitely detailed and subtly political songs about love and loss and redemption (and flies, which he despised). Bullington was born Sept. 2, 1955, in Annapolis, MD. He was a sophomore in high school when he bought his first guitar, a Kent, for \$20. He started taking lessons and trading for better and better guitars (a habit that stuck with him all his life). He went to college at Vanderbilt University, mainly because it was in Nashville, and soaked up the music scene while studying for a geology degree. After college Bullington worked in the oil fields of North Dakota, the Northern Rockies, the Texas Panhandle, and the Amazon before deciding to become a doctor. After medical school at the University of Virginia, he practiced medicine on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation in Montana, in a small coastal Alaska town, the mountains

of West Virginia, and finally back in Montana, where he took a job at the small hospital in White Sulphur Springs. He started writing songs in the quiet early morning hours. Those sessions filled up Bullington's first CD, *Two Lane Highway* (2007), and the next four albums followed in quick succession: *White Sulphur Springs* (2008), *Satisfaction Garage* (2010), *Lazy Moon* (2012), and *Ben Bullington* (2013). Rodney Crowell, the iconic American singer and songwriter, said of his friend, "Back in the early seventies we were all writing songs for the purest of reasons. And there was Townes Van Zandt showing us what to do. Then along came Ben Bullington reminding us of why we do this. That's the gift we were given."

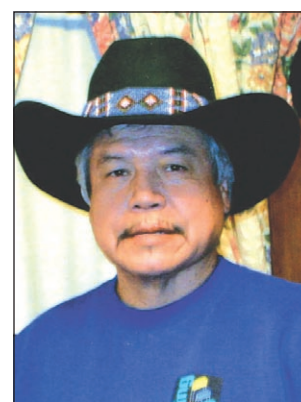
– Excerpted from an obituary by Joanne Gardner

The family and friends of **William (Bill) Murray**. He died Dec. 21 in Great Falls; he was 78. Murray graduated from Great Falls High School and served aboard the USS Lexington, where he saw duty in the South China Sea and Suez; he also served in the Navy Reserve and the Montana Army National Guard. He was in broadcasting for 10 years at KXLK, and KARR/KOPR as chief engineer, a popular announcer, news director and a "stringer" for UPI. In 1986, he became Disaster and Emergency Services (DES) Director for Cascade County, and during his 30-years was considered an expert in HAZMAT and every known disaster in his field. As EMS coordinator, he created Quick Response Teams (QRU's), initiated 911, and was a certified instructor who trained dispatchers. He also designed and managed all radio and telecommunications systems in the county and taught electronics for 10 years at Great Falls VoTech (MSU). According to Helen Elliott, president of the Pondera Arts Council (PAC) in Conrad, he was also "a colossal grant writer and manager." In a tribute published in the *Great Falls Tribune*, she notes that Murray was the principal writer of a successful grant application for \$151,000 from the Wiegand Foundation to restore the Orpheum Theatre in Conrad. He also helped PAC with a Montana Cultural Trust Grant in 2012. She notes that he and his wife, Darlene, wrote and edited the national Civil Defense Bulletins and Impact and won awards for superior graphics, style and content. "Murray was truly a unique individual who made many remarkable contributions to Great Falls, Cascade County, the state of Montana and the Pondera Arts Council," writes Elliott.

The friends and family of pianist **Donald Andrew Murray**. The life-long Helena resident died Jan. 18; he was 78. He was born March 5, 1935, in Columbus Hospital in Great Falls and went to school in Helena, where he was active in church activities and the Brewery Theater, and learned to play piano. As a high school student, he frequently played at the Montana Club. He attended Gonzaga University in Spokane, and graduated from Carroll College and Eastern Montana College with degrees in education and English. He became an elementary school teacher, teaching in rural schools, at a military base in Alaska and for over 30 years in the Helena School District, retiring in 1989. His students remember him tap dancing on top of his desk at the end of the year if they completed certain reading requirements. He played piano for religious services at Touchmark and social music for clubs and organizations, the senior citizens center, Metropolitan Club dinners, and nursing homes. He seldom turned down a request to play and seldom sought compensation. He was a member and former music cantor at Cathedral of St. Helena parish and St. Mary Catholic Community. He believed music was his gift he could share.

– From the *Independent Record*, Jan. 21

The family and friends of **Leland James "Jimi" Hewankorn**. The musician, chef and member of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes died Dec. 30; he was 61. Hewankorn was born Jan. 14 in Hot Springs, and became an all-around MVP athlete and Golden Glove Boxing Champion of northwestern Montana. He was a director for the Indian Alliance Program in Missoula, a chef in Las Vegas, and held various jobs for the Tribes. As a musician, he played with numerous recording artists, including Faron Young, Johnny Rodriguez, and Boxcar Willie, and used his talents to raise money for those in need. He was well known in Indian Country for his stickgame skills and notorious boyish humor.



Leland James Hewankorn



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